

# Essex County Herald.

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ISLAND POND, VT. FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1911.

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## Probate Court Sessions.

At 10 o'clock A. M. THE PROBATE COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF ESSEX will be held at Island Pond, Vermont, on the first Monday of February, June, September and December, in the afternoon of each of the above dates. At Island Pond on the first Saturday of each month. Special sessions will be held at any place in the district by agreement. Address communications to Guildhall office, to E. W. Wynn, Register, to Island Pond office, to HERBERT W. BLAKE, Judge.

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## Cavanagh, Forest Ranger

The Great Conservation Novel

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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CHAPTER II  
THE FOREST RANGER.

LIZIE VIRGINIA was awakened next morning by the passing of some one down the hall calling at each door. "Six o'clock!" She had not slept at all till after 1. She was lame, heart weary and dismayed, but she rose and dressed herself as neatly as before. She had decided to return to Sulphur. "I cannot endure this," she had repeated to herself a hundred times. "I will not!"

Hearing the clatter of dishes, she ventured with desperate courage into the dining room, which was again filled with cowboys, coal miners, ranchers and their tumbled families and certain nondescript town loafers of tramp-like appearance.

Slipping into a seat at the end of the table which offered the cleanest cloth, Lize Virginia glanced round upon her neighbors with shrinking eyes. All were shoveling their food with knife blades and guzzling their coffee with bent heads. Their faces scared her, and she dropped her eyes.

At her left, however, sat two men whose greetings were frank and manly and whose table manners betrayed a higher form of life. One of them was a tall man with a lean red face, against which his blond mustache lay like a chalk mark. He wore a corduroy jacket cut in Norfolk style, and in the collar of his yellow shirt a green tie was loosely knotted. His hands were long and freckled, but were manifestly trained to polite usages.

The other man was younger and browner and of a compact, athletic figure. On the breast of his olive green coat hung a silver badge which bore a pine tree in the center. His shirt was tan colored and rough, but his head was handsome. He looked like a young officer in the undress uniform of the regular army. His hands were strong, but rather small and the lines of his shoulders graceful. Most attractive of all were his eyes, so brown,

so quietly humorous and so keen. In the rumble of cheap and vulgar talk the voices of these men appealed to the troubled girl with great charm. She felt more akin to them than to any one else in the room, and from time to time she raised her eyes to their faces.

They were aware of her also, and their gaze was frankly admiring as well as wondering, and in passing the ham and eggs or the sugar they contrived to show her that they considered her a lady in a rough place and that they would like to know more about her.

She accepted their civilities with gratitude and listened to their talk with growing interest. It seemed that the young man had come down from the hills to meet his friend and take him back to his cabin.

"I can't do it today, Ross," said the older man. "I wish I could, but one meal of this kind is all I can stand these days."

Mrs. Wetherford, seizing the moment, came down to do the honors. "You fellows ought to know my girl, Virginia, this is Forest Supervisor Redfield, and this is Ross Cavanagh, his forest ranger in this district. You ought to know each other. My girl's just back from school, and she don't think much of the fork. It's a little too coarse for her."

Lee flushed under this introduction, and her distress was so evident that both men came to her rescue.

The older man bowed and said, "I didn't know you had a daughter, Mrs. Wetherford." And Cavanagh, with a glance of admiration, added, "We've been wondering who you might be."

Lize went on: "I thought I'd got rid of her. She's been away now for about ten years. I don't know but it was a mistake. Look's like she's grown a little too fine haired for us doughies out here."

"So much the worse for us," replied Redfield.

This little dialogue gave the girl time to recover herself, but as Cavanagh watched the blush fade from her face, leaving it cold and white, he sympathized with her—pitied her from the bottom of his heart. He perceived that he was a chance spectator of the first scene in a painful domestic drama—one that might easily become a tragedy. He wondered what the forces might be which had brought such a daughter to this sloven, this virgo. To see a maid of this delicate bloom thrust into such a place as Lize Wetherford's "hotel" had the reputation of being roused indignation.

"When did you reach town?" he asked, and into his voice his admiration crept.

"Only last night."

"You find great changes here?"

"Not so great as in my mother. It's all—"

She stopped abruptly, and he understood.

Lize being drawn back to her cash register, Redfield turned to say: "My dear young lady, I don't suppose you remember me, but I know you when you were a lot of five or six. I knew your father—very well."

"Did you?" Her face lighted up.

"Yes, poor fellow; he went away from here rather under a cloud, you know."

"I remember a little of it. I was here when the shooting took place."

"So you were. Well, since then much has happened to us all," he explained to the ranger. "There wasn't room for a dashing young blood such as Ed Wetherford was in those days. He turned to Lee. 'He was no worse than the men on the other side—it was dog eat dog—but some way the people rather settled on him as a scapegoat. He was forced out, and your mother has borne the brunt of it since. Those were lawless days.'

More and more Lee Virginia's heart went out in trust toward these two men. Opposed to the malodorous, unshaven throng which filled the room, they seemed wonderfully softened and sympathetic. In the ranger's gaze was something else—something which made her troubles somehow less intolerable. She felt that he understood the difficult situation in which she found herself.

of touching him as one man lays hand upon another, was profoundly revealing to Lee Virginia. She revolted from it without realizing exactly what it meant, and, feeling deeply but vaguely the forest ranger's sympathy, she asked:

"How can you endure this kind of life?"

"I can't, and I don't," he answered cautiously, for they were being closely observed. "I am seldom in town. My dominion is more than a mile above this level. My cabin is 9,000 feet above the sea. It is clean and quiet up there."

"Are all the other restaurants in the village like this?"

"Worse. I come here because it is the best."

She rose. "I can't stand this air and these flies any longer. They're too disgusting."

He followed her into the other house, conscious of the dismay and bitterness which burst forth the instant they were alone. "What am I to do? She is my mother, but I've lost all sense of relationship to her. And these people, except you and Mr. Redfield, are all disgusting to me. It isn't because my mother is poor, it isn't

like the men out here."

"I shouldn't care to be like some of them," he answered. "My being here is quite logical. I went into the cattle business like many another, and I went broke. I served under Colonel Roosevelt in the Cuban war and after my term was out naturally drifted back. I love the wilderness and have some natural taste for forestry, and I can ride and pack a horse as well as most cowboys; hence my uniform. I'm not the best forest ranger in the service, I'll admit, but I fancy I'm a fair average."

"And that is your badge—the pine tree?"

"Yes, and I am proud of it. Some of the fellows are not, but so far as I am concerned I am glad to be known as a defender of the forest. A tree means much to me. I never mark one for felling without a sense of responsibility to the future."

Her questions came slowly, like those of a child. "Where do you live?"

"Directly up the South Fork about twenty miles."

"What do you do?"

He smiled. "Not much. I ride the trails, guard the game, put out fires, scale lumber, burn brush, build bridges, herd cattle, count sheep, survey land and a few other odd chores. It's supposed to be a soft snap, but I can't see it that way."

"Do you live alone?"

"Yes, for the larger part of the time. I have an assistant, who is with me during part of the summer months. Mostly I am alone. However, I am supposed to keep open house, and I catch a visitor now and then."

"Do you expect to do this always?"

He smiled again. "There you touch my secret spring. I have the hope of being chief forester some time—I mean we all have the prospect of promotion to sustain us. The service is so new that any one with even a knowledge of forestry is in demand. By and by real foresters will arise."

She returned abruptly to her own problem. "I dread to go back to my mother, but I must. Oh, how I hate that hotel! I loathe the flies, the smells, the people that eat there, the waiters—everything!" She shuddered.

"Many of the evils you mention could be reformed, except, of course, some of the people who come to eat. I fear several of them have gone beyond reformation."

As they started back down the street she saw the motor stage just leaving the door of the office. "That settles one question," she said. "I can't get away till tomorrow."

"Where would you go if you broke camp—back to the east?"

"No. My mother thinks there is a place for me in Sulphur City."

"Your case interests me deeply. I wish I could advise you to stay, but this is a rough town for a girl like you. Why don't you talk the problem over with the supervisor?" His voice became firmer. "Mrs. Redfield is the very one to help you."

"Where does she live?"

"Their ranch lies just above Sulphur, at the mouth of the canyon. May I tell him what you've told me? He's a good sort, is Redfield—much better able to advise than I am."

Cavanagh found himself enjoying the confidence of this girl so strangely thrown into his care, and the curious comment of the people in the street did not disturb him except as it bore upon his companion's position in the town.

At the door of the hotel some half a dozen men were clustered. As the young couple approached they gave way, but a short, powerful man, whom Lee Virginia recognized as Gregg, the sheepman, called to the ranger:

"I want to see you before you leave town, Mr. Ranger."

"Very well. I shall be here all the forenoon," answered Cavanagh in the tone of a man accepting a challenge. Then, turning to the girl, he said earnestly: "I want to help you. I shall be here for lunch, and meanwhile I wish you would take Redfield into your confidence. He's a wise old boy, and everybody knows him. No one doubts his motives. Besides, he has a family and is rich and unmarried. Would you like me to talk with him?"

"If you will. I want to do right. Indeed, I do."

"I'm sure of that," he said, with eyes upon her flushed and quivering face. "There's a way out, believe me."

**CHAPTER III.**  
**LIZE AND HER DAUGHTER.**

THEY parted on the little porch of the hotel, and her eyes followed his upright figure till he entered one of the shops. He had precisely the look and bearing of a young lieutenant in the regular army. She returned to her own room strangely heartened by her talk with the ranger.

She was still pondering when her mother came in.

"How'd you sleep last night?"

"Lee Virginia could not bring herself to lie. 'Not very well,' she admitted.

"Neither did I. Fact of the matter is your coming fairly upset me. I've been kind of used up for three months. I don't know what ails me. I'd ought to go up to Sulphur to see a doctor, but there don't seem to be any free time. I fear to have lost my grip. Food don't give me any strength. I saw you talking with Ross Cavanagh. There's a man. And Reddy—Reddy is what you call a fancy rancher; goes in for alfalfa and fruit and all that. He isn't in the forest service for the pay or for graft. He's got a regular place up there above Sulphur—hot and cold water all through the house, a furnace in the cellar and two bathrooms, so they tell me; I never was in the place. You better keep out of the cañy. It ain't a fit place for you. Fact is, I wasn't expecting anything so fine as you are. I laid awake till 3 o'clock last

night figuring on what to do. I reckon you'd better go back and give this outfit up as a bad job. I used to tell Ed you didn't belong to neither of us, and you don't. I can't see where you did come from—anyhow, I don't want the responsibility of having you here. Why, you'll have half the men in the county hitching to your corral. You're too good for any of them. You just plan to pack up and pull out tomorrow."

She went out with a dragging step that softened the girl's heart. Lize's daughter came nearer to loving her at this moment than at any time since her fifth year.

In truth, Lize had risen that morning intending "to whirl in and clean up the house," being suddenly conscious to some degree of the dirt and disorder around her, but she found herself physically unequal to the task. Her brain seemed misty, and her food had been a source of keen pain to her.

She gave sharp answers to all the men who came up to ask after her daughter, and to one who remarked on the girl's good looks and demanded an introduction she said: "Get along! You fellows want to understand I'll kill the man that sets out to fool with my girl, I tell you that!"

While yet Lee Virginia was wondering how to begin the day's work some one knocked on her door, and in answer to her invitation a woman stepped in—a thin blond hag with a weak smile and watery blue eyes. "Is this little Lee Virginny?" she asked.

The girl rose. "Yes."

"Well, howdy?" She extended her hand, and Lee took it. "My name's Jackson—Mrs. Orlando Jackson. I knew yore pa and you before 'the war.' Are ye back for to stay?"

"No, I don't think so. Will you sit down?"

Mrs. Jackson took a seat. "Come back to see how yore ma was, I reckon? Found her pretty poorly, didn't ye?" She lowered her voice. "I think she's got cancer of the stomach—now that's my guess."

Virginia started. "What makes you think so?"

"Well, I knew a woman who went just that way. Had that same dabby, funny look—and that same distress after eatin'. I told her this mornin' she'd better go up to Sulphur and see that new doctor."

"What did you mean by 'the war'?" asked Virginia.

"Why, you remember the rustler war? We date everything out here from that year. You was here, for I saw ye."

"Oh!" exclaimed Virginia. "I understand now. Yes, I was here. I saw my father at the head of the cowboys."

"They weren't cowboys. They were hired killers from Texas. That's what let yore pa out of the state. He was on the wrong side, and if it hadn't 'a' been for the regular soldiers he'd 'a' been wiped out right hyer. As it was he had to skip the range and hadn't never been back. I don't s'pose folks will lay it up agin you—bein' a girl—but they couldn't no son of Ed Wetherford come back here and settle, not for a minute. Why, yere ma has had to bluff the whole county 'a'most—not that I lay anything up agin her. I tell folks she was that bewitched with Ed she couldn't see things any way but his way. He fought to save his ranch and stawk, but she couldn't do nothin'—and then to have him go back on her the way he did—slip out 'twixt two days and never write; that just about shot her to pieces. I never could understand that in Ed; he 'peared so mortally fond of you and of her too. He sure was fond of you!" She shook her head. "No, can't nobody make me believe Ed Wetherford is alive."

Lee Virginia started. "Who says he's alive?"

"Now, don't get excited, girl. He ain't alive, but yet folks say we don't know he's dead. He just dropped out so far as yore ma is concerned and so far as the county is concerned, but some thought you was with him in the east."

The girl was now aware that her visitor was hoping to gain some further information and so curiously answered: "I've never seen my father since that night the soldiers came and took him away to the fort. And my mother told me he died down in Texas."

Mrs. Jackson rose. "Well, I'm glad to 've had a word with ye; but, you hear me, yore ma has got to have doctor's help or she's a'goin' to fall down some day soon."

Every word the woman uttered, every tone of her drawing voice, put Lee Virginia back into the past. She heard again the swift gallop of hoofs, saw once more the long line of armed ranchers and felt the hush of fear that lay over the little town on that fateful day. The situation became clearer in her mind. She recalled vividly the words of astonishment and hate with which the women had greeted her mother on the morning when the news came that Edward Wetherford was among the invading cattle barons—was indeed one of the leaders.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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"You really ought to take up the study of reincarnation," said the young woman of great mentality.

"Not I," answered Mr. Dustin Star. "These investigations are giving me all the trouble concerning my past that I can handle at present."—Washington Star.